

## COBBETT'S WEEKLY POLITICAL REGISTER.

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"No person, who has an office, or place of profit under the King, or receives a pension from the Crown, shall be capable of serving as a Member of the House of Commons." —Act of Parliament, passed in the twelfth and thirteenth of William III. Chap. 2; and by which act the crown of these realms was settled upon the present reigning family.

"*Qu.* Who is likely to be frugal of the people's money?

"*Ans.* He who puts none of it in his own pocket." —BOLINGBROKE.

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## LETTER II.

TO THE RT. HON. WILLIAM WINDHAM,

I. Upon the state of the Continent. — II. Upon the natural consequences with respect to England — III. Upon the measures necessary to prevent those consequences.

SIR, Botley, 4th Dec. 1806.

In the letter, which I did myself the honour to address to you in the preceding Number, I alluded to the measures, which I considered as absolutely necessary to ensure the preservation of our country from the perils that await it. Those measures I now propose to speak of in a manner more specific, troubling you previously with some remarks tending to shew that the necessity of those measures actually exists.

I. To attempt a description of the present state of the Continent of Europe would be a waste of time. That Continent is now subdued. The whole of it, Russia excepted, has fallen before the arms of one nation; and that nation is our implacable enemy. To see so many governments, so many ancient establishments, so many of the works of centuries swept down one upon another, like the pines of America yielding to the force of the hurricane; to see so many noble and royal Houses annihilated, or worse than annihilated by owing their existence to the mere compassion of men, who were but yesterday unheard of in the world; to contemplate this picture the heart sickens within one. Yet, I must confess, that with all my veneration for antiquity; with all that desire, which is so powerful in me, to see preserved whatever has been long established and held in honour; notwithstanding all my feelings on the side of birth and of rank, I must confess, that the contumely and insolence of our "high-blooded" opponents at Westminster, and that the foul combination there formed against the exercise of the undoubted rights of the people, a combination avowedly founded upon the arrogant and unjust allegation, that, on account of our low birth, we were unworthy of any public influence or trust; this, I must confess, Sir, has had a tendency to mollify, in me, the

mortification and grief, which the fate of certain persons on the Continent was so well calculated to excite. To forgive, and even to love our enemies, is, in certain cases, our duty; but, this precept, if stretched too far, would subvert every principle of justice, and would leave nations as well as individuals without the means of defence against aggressors of every description. Not to carry resentment beyond the period of repentance is reasonable and just, and is strictly commanded; but, to love and cherish those, who discover their inward hatred, and who openly affect contempt of us, is commanded by neither morality nor religion. — But, Sir, to apply these remarks to the subject more immediately before us, may we not be permitted to ask, whether contumely and insolence, somewhat resembling that above-noticed, may not, upon the Continent of Europe, have largely contributed towards the producing of those events, which now seem to have stricken terror to the hearts of even the most arrogant and foolish? May we not be permitted to ask, too, where, in the history of the last eighteen eventful years, the superior wisdom and courage and virtue of "high-blood" has discovered itself in a manner so decided and so conspicuous as to warrant the doctrines held forth by our haughty and supereilious adversaries at Westminster? Yes, surely, we may ask, whether any one will now venture to maintain, that none but "high-blooded" men are capable of defending the honour and the territory of their country? — With respect to what may yet take place in the way of subjugation upon the Continent, the erection of a kingdom in Poland seems pretty certain; and, this, it will be recollect, was predicted by me more than a twelvemonth ago. It was, indeed, an event easy to foresee; and, whatever effect it may produce upon Russia by carrying the armies and the principles of the South into that vast Empire, it will not fail to produce astonishing effects elsewhere, and of which effects we shall, if I am not greatly deceived, soon have ocular demonstration. This last event will complete the

"federative system" of France; or in other words, her scheme of "*universal dominion*," so much laughed at by the elder Sheridan and others, and so much dreaded by Mr. Burke and yourself. These Islands (God be praised!) are still unsubdued; but when the Romans had, in the common acceptance of the words, "*conquered the world*," there were still many parts of the world wherein they had never set foot. To be called the conquerors of the world it was sufficient that they had left no nation in a state to be their competitor for power.

II. Of the consequences, which the subjugation of the continent by our enemy must naturally produce with respect to England, we have already, in the transactions at Hamburgh, seen a trifling specimen. Often, as the public can bear testimony, have I reminded the Baalains of the city, that the soldier was abroad; and that, rail and curse and cry as much as they pleased, he would, I was afraid, before he sheathed the sword, have his share of the good things of this world. They may now, probably, begin to believe me; and, when they consider, that at the very moment when their goods were seized at Hamburgh, they were exulting in their triumph at Brentford, they will certainly excuse the people, over whom they triumphed, for being too much absorbed with their own chagrin to have time to break their hearts with sorrow for that seizure. For my own part, events of this sort do, I will freely confess, give me very little uneasiness; because I am persuaded, that, with respect to the general and permanent interests of the kingdom, the seizure of mercantile property, already deposited in foreign states, can be productive of very little injury. I know well enough, that the merchants and the daily press will set up a most lamentable outcry upon this score; and they will accuse me of rejoicing, or, at least, of not weeping, at the success of the enemy; but, this will not deter me from expressing my opinion upon the subject; and, they cannot, in this instance, at any rate, accuse me of magnifying the power and success of that enemy. I will go a little further in this way, and say, that, were the French to succeed in seizing all the English goods and property in every port and place in Europe, and if they were to prevent such goods from being sent thither in future, I do not believe it would, even in the smallest degree, tend to disable England either for the defending of herself, or for the annoying of her foes. That it would shut up a great number of commercial houses, I allow; that it would lower a great number of merchants, and

bankers; that it would diminish the means by which the Shaws and the Mellishes have been put into parliament; that it would do much in this way I am ready to allow; but, I am by no means prepared to allow, that it would be injurious either to the liberties and happiness of the people, or to the permanent security and dignity of the throne. — There is a strange perversity, which, upon matters of this sort, appears to have taken possession of men's minds. "*How are we to live, say they, if we cannot get rid of our manufactures?*" They regard the nation in the light of an individual shopkeeper; and then they run on reasoning upon all the consequences of *a total loss of customers*. But, they forget, that the individual shopkeeper must sell his goods in order to obtain food and raiment and money to pay for his goods, whereas the nation has nobody to pay for its goods, and can never receive an addition either to its food or its raiment for the sale of its goods. The fact is, that exports of every sort, generally speaking, only tend to enrich a few persons and to cause the labouring part of the people to live harder than they otherwise would do. We have seen, that many other nations have arisen to the highest pitch of greatness without the exporting of a single article of merchandize; and we have, I think, a pretty satisfactory example, at this time, in the situation of France. Yet, our eyes are not opened. We are not, indeed, so stone blind as we were some few years ago, when, in answer to those who dwelt upon the dangers to be apprehended from the increasing power of France, the conceited and shallow-headed Pitt talked of nothing but the inexhaustible resources of our commerce, and of that poverty and bankruptcy, which must, he said, end in the total destruction of the power of the enemy. You well remember, Sir, that, at the peace of Amiens, your apprehensions of the still further increasing power of France were, by that enlightened statesman, Lord Hawkesbury, answered by a constantly repeated appeal to our Capital, Credit, and Commerce, to which he as invariably and triumphantly pointed, as the no less profound Mr. Mellish lately did to the state of the poll. But, if one were now to go and ask that famous possessor of a four-thousand-a-year sinecure what Capital, Credit, and Commerce have been able to do in arresting the progress of French power, and how they are likely to operate in the preserving of England from the lot of Prussia, he would, methinks, be puzzled for a reply. — To the embarrassment and

obstruction in our commercial pursuits, I do not, therefore, for my part, attach much importance; but, in the complete subjugation of the Continent, I see, and, I think, every man must see with dread, the means which the French will acquire of meeting us with an equal, if not with a superior force, upon that element, where we have hitherto been the acknowledged masters, and upon which mastership, talk as we may, we do, at bottom, place our *only* hope of safety. Exactly how long it may be before our enemy will be able to arrive at such equality, or superiority, it would perhaps, be difficult to say; but, is it possible to believe, that, with the naval arsenals of every state upon the Continent, those of Russia excepted, at his command, he will not, in a comparatively short space of time, be able to send out fleets equal, at least in numbers, to ours? Holland, let it be remembered, is now no longer under the rule of an assembly of fat-headed burgo-masters. That Denmark will be somewhat worse than neutral who can doubt? Whatever force Prussia had will now belong to France. Genoa, Spain, Portugal, must contribute to their last ship and last sailor. With all the ports and all the arsenals of continental Europe at his command, he may, and I trust he will, be unable, for a long while, at least, to equal us in naval skill and prowess; but, while defeats will cost him little, victories will cost us much. We have seen what he is able to do by land; and can it be doubted, that, when all the Continent is fashioned to his will, the same extensive plans and unremitting perseverance will be applied to his operations by sea? The conquest of England has always appeared to me to be, by him, reserved for his last labour. To suppose that he has not resolved to attempt it would be a mark of downright insanity. The only question is as to the time.

—There has been, and yet is, much difference of opinion with respect to the practicability of his landing a large army in England, while our fleets can keep the sea; but, in the case of those fleets being unable to keep the sea, there can be no doubt upon the point; and, if he arrive at the capability of engaging, at the same time, or nearly the same time, all our naval forces in the Channel and in the North Seas, our fleets, even supposing them to be at all points completely victorious, will not, immediately after such engagements, be able to keep the sea. —In viewing his points of attack he surely will not overlook Ireland. To risk a fleet and an army of thirty or forty thousand men, will not, with such an object in view,

be the subject of an hour's hesitation. If one expedition fail another will follow; and, if that fail, another, until success, in some degree, at any rate, crown his enterprizes.—This is a war, which, with him will be now only *beginning*. There will be novelty to recommend it to his people and his army, while to the latter will be held out the powerful enticement of plunder unparalleled. Every day his means of carrying on this war will be increasing in quantity and improving in quality; while, with us, it will be singularly fortunate, if the reverse is not the case.—To hope, therefore, that we shall not have, at no great distance of time, to fight for England upon English ground, can be expected in nobody but such men as Messrs. Bowles and Mellish and Shaw and the Sheridans and Byng and Moore and their like. We have long been *talking* about this fighting for England upon English ground; but we must now think of *acting*; for, as sure as we are in existence, the necessity will come.

III. If we regard it as certain, that, first or last, we shall, before the contest with the Emperor Napoleon is at an end, have to fight against his armies upon our own land; if this be our opinion, it then behoves us to consider what may be the final consequences; it behoves us to ask, why we should not, in such a war, share the fate of our neighbours; or, in the language of the courts, to *shew cause*, why we should not be subjugated. For, though we must all, of course, have the greatest possible confidence in the wisdom as well as in the personal courage of the Duke of York, and in the wisdom and personal courage of the Dukes of Cambridge, Cumberland, Gloucester, and all the other persons, whom his Majesty and the Duke of York have selected as commanders upon the staff in these islands; and though we have the happiness to know, that our army have all been disciplined and dressed in exact conformity to the discipline and dress of the Prussian army, while we, at the same time, reflect, that we have the excellent example, both military and moral, of at least, thirteen thousand Hanoverian troops. Yet, Sir, since we have seen great commanders, like ours, I mean the Duke of Brunswick, Prince Hohenlohe, &c. &c. defeated and their armies captured by wholesale; since we have seen that Prussian discipline and dress could not defend Prussia; since we have seen, that Hanoverian troops, though animated by the presence of one of those illustrious and gallant princes, to whom the defence of England is now so judiciously committed, were not sufficient to defend

Hanover: since we have seen all this, and that, too, within a very few months, I think that every man who is really anxious to preserve the independence of the country will wish to see it provided with something more than the wisdom and courage of our generals, great as they may be and aided as they are by Prussian discipline and dress and by Hanoverian troops.—The states, which, one after another, have fallen before the arms of France, have contained a miserable and degraded *people*. We have seen all their princes and nobles and armies active enough; but, except in Switzerland, we have never seen any thing of the people. In every other instance the people of the conquered country seem to have been quiet and indifferent spectators of the conflict; or, if they have appeared to feel any interest at all, it has, as far as our intelligence goes, been on the side of the conqueror. France, on the contrary, has exhibited a most complete proof of what *the people alone* are able to do. There, not only had the people no princes or nobles to assist them against the invaders of their country; but, their princes and nobles were either inactive, or expressing impatience for the arrival of the invaders, or, were employed in stirring up and encouraging those invaders and actually aiding them in their attacks upon France. We know the result: love of country supplied the place of generals, of discipline, of magazines of resources of every kind, or rather, it created them all in abundance. The king and his family, the nobles, the clergy, the farmers of taxes, the merchants, the parliaments, the courts of justice, all were overthrown and destroyed; but, amidst the wreck the people lived, fought, defended their country, and finally became the conquerors of their invaders.—With this example before him, Sir, is there any man, is there any statesman, who, in calculating the means of defending England, will leave the hearts of the people out of the question? “No,” I shall, perhaps, be told, “but the ‘hearts of the people *are now* decidedly ‘with the government;’” a fact which I certainly shall not deny. But, this being happily the case, then, all that I shall venture to do, is, to point out such measures as appear to me to be necessary to prevent the hearts of the people from being alienated from their government, or, in other words, to prevent the people of England from looking at an approaching invasion with the eyes of Italians and Germans.—It is greatly to detract from the merit of patriotism, or love of country, to regard it as an attachment to the mere soil, an attachment of which brutes

are not only capable, but which they invariably entertain. Love of country is founded in the value which men set upon its renown, its laws, its liberties, and its prosperity; or, more properly speaking, perhaps, upon the reputation, the security, the freedom from oppression, and the happiness, which they derive from belonging to such country. If this definition of the foundation of patriotism be correct, it follows, of course, that, in proportion as a country loses its renown, has its laws and liberties frittered away, and its prosperity diminished, the patriotism of the people will decline; and, if we could suppose it possible for England to become, in matters of government, what many of the states upon the continent were, upon what ground could we expect to see Englishmen voluntarily risking their lives in its defence?—The objects, for which men in general contend with the most zeal, are those in which they are most deeply interested. Amongst men who set a high value upon reputation, whether for talents or for courage, the renown of their country will be an object full as interesting as its liberties or its prosperity; but, amongst the mass of the people, freedom from oppression, and that happiness which arises from a comfortable subsistence, will always be the chief objects of attachment, and the principal motives of all the exertions which they will make in defence of their country.—If this be true, and I do not think that any one will deny it, does it not behove us, Sir, to think seriously of some means of alleviating the burdens of the people, or, at any rate, to prevent the increase of those burdens? Are these burdens imaginary? Are they not but too real, and too severely felt? Can you, Sir, contemplate the 1,200,000 paupers in England and Wales, without lamenting that so large a portion of the people have nothing, no, not even the rags upon their backs, to call their own? Add to these the vast numbers, who, though not actually paupers, have nothing worthy of the name of property; consider how fast this class is increasing from the natural and unavoidable effects of such a system of taxation as ours; and then say, how great is the number of persons who are in the enjoyment of that for the preservation of which they may reasonably be expected to venture their lives.—Persons, who do not examine or reflect; persons, who, in certain situations of life, can know nothing of the distresses and miseries of the labouring part of the people, may be excused for paying no attention to them; but, such inattention in a statesman is, at all times, and particularly at a time like the present, inexcusable. Ex-

perience, daily observation, minute and repeated personal inquiry and examination, have made me familiar with the state of the labouring poor, and, Sir, I challenge contradiction when I say, that a labouring man, in England, with a wife and only three children though he never lose a day's work, though he and his family be economical, frugal, and industrious in the most extensive sense of those words, is not now able to procure himself by his labour a single meal of meat from one end of the year unto the other. Is this a state in which the labouring man ought to be? Is this a state, to preserve the blessings of which he can reasonably be expected to make a voluntary tender of his services? Is this a state, to prevent any change in which he must naturally be ready to make, if necessary, a sacrifice of his life? How this state of hardship and of misery is produced by the system of taxation; how that system, by creating idlers lessens the quantity of production, at the same time that it feeds one man upon that which has been produced by the sweat of another; how that system diminishes the number of proprietors of the soil; how it increases the riches and the luxuries of the few and the poverty and wretchedness of the many, I have heretofore, to my own satisfaction at least, amply proved. And, Sir, in answer to all this, shall we be told by those "petty tyrants," of whom you speak in your Address to the Norfolk Freeholders, that the labourer's miseries arise from his vices, and that, instead of bread he stands in need of the lash? Shall we be told by the elder Sheridan and Messrs. Bowles and Redhead Yorke, wallowing as they are in luxuries derived from our labour; shall we be told by these men, that we must make further sacrifices? Sacrifices "not only of 'the comforts but of the necessaries of life?'" And, if we complain at this cool and hard-hearted insolence; if we say that it is for them to begin at last to make some little sacrifices, shall we be stigmatized as Jacobins and Levellers? Not merely to the labourer is the degrading effect of the taxing system confined. The tradesman, the farmer, the clergyman, and the gentleman of ancient family, if he be not already driven from the mansion of his forefathers; all these feel, and most grievously feel, the effects of a system, which is daily and visibly depriving them of the hope of seeing their children able to move in the same circle that they themselves move in, and the means of accomplishing which hope they see taken away by the tax-gatherer to be carried to aggrandize such men as the Bowles's and the Sheridans. And, if these persons, when

they see themselves and their families thus stripped, complain; if they express a wish to have their burdens alleviated, and to see the public money more wisely and justly applied, are they to be told, by the Bowles's and the Sheridans, that they are Jacobins and Levellers? And that, though it is just to call them Jacobins and Levellers, it is also just and reasonable to call upon to make voluntary sacrifices, and, if necessary, to shed their blood, in defence of this same system?

—But, *what are the specific measures that I would recommend?* They are not few, Sir, in number, nor do they relate solely to a reduction of the taxes; but, there is one thing, which must, if any good be to be done, take the lead of all attempts of an inferior description; and that is, *a House of Commons, in which there should be neither placeman nor pensioner.*—From a thorough conviction, that all our calamities and dangers had arisen from the members of the House of Commons being capable of receiving the money of their constituents, in consequence of votes given by themselves, I did, when I offered myself to the Electors of Honiton, state that I thought that no member of that House ever ought to touch the public money. I was instructed thus to speak from the reason of the case, as well as from experience; but, until I saw Sir Francis Burdett's last address to the Freeholders of Middlesex; I did not know that the principle had been so clearly laid down in a legislative enactment, and that a law had actually been passed, containing the wise and important provision, the words of which serve as a motto to this letter. That act of parliament I have now read; and, considering the time when it was passed, and the persons by whom the passing of it was advised, I should like to hear how the *Whig*, Mr. Whitbread, would answer the observations of Sir Francis. Mr. O'Bryen too, (of whom, by the bye, I think much more highly than I do of Mr. Whitbread), after declaring Mr. Whitbread's letter to be *unanswerable*, says: "the objection to Mr. Sheridan (as a candidate for Westminster) " of holding an office, is neither English, " nor even French, nor Grecian, nor Roman; it is of no clime or country, but " totally original; it may be the best of " doctrines, but it is wholly new." How Mr. O'Bryen will answer the act of parliament, made for the security of the liberties of Englishmen, I will not presume to guess; but, I am very strongly of the opinion, that, by this time, both these gentlemen are heartily sorry for having suffered their wish to annoy Sir Francis Burdett to carry them to such lengths. Mr. Whitbread's attack,

when the obvious motives are taken into view, was the most unfair and the most unmanly, that, as far as my observation has gone, has ever disgraced electioneering contests. But he evidently estimated his character and his power far too highly. Like Mr. Sheridan, he does not seem to have had a friend to tell him that he was upon the wane in public opinion. He thought his stock of reputation so great as to leave him enough to squander in defence of his placed and pensioned friends; and, like Mr. Sheridan, too, he did not discover his error, until it was too late. — To return to the principle, for which I am contending as proper to be acted upon most rigidly at this moment; there is, upon the very face of the thing, such an evident incongruity, nay, such a barefaced indecency, in members of an assembly, who are chosen to represent the people, and who are specially charged to see that their money is not misapplied, voting part of that money to themselves, that it appears to me passing strange, that any disinterested and reflecting man should ever have been reconciled to it. That members of the House of Commons should have been paid by the people who sent them, and that they should now be paid, for their time and expences, was, and now would be, just and reasonable; but, that they, or any of them, should receive, in any shape, remuneration from any other quarter, and especially in virtue of appropriations made in consequence of their own votes, the money coming out of that purse to guard which is their office, is, whatever Messrs. Whitbread and O'Bryen may say of it, without a parallel amongst all the mischievous inconsistencies and incongruities that ever were heard of in the world.—Mr. Whitbread's doctrine is, that, if the members of the House of Commons were prohibited from holding places of profit, the people would be reduced to the sad necessity of being governed by the worst of mankind. Upon this point he has been answered by Major Cartwright, in the 22d Number of the present volume; and, in this sheet, he will find another letter addressed to him by that gentleman, after which if he can hold up his head in public he must have more confidence or less feeling than generally falls to the lot even of a whig of the 19th century. But, *why* does it follow that we must be governed by the worst of mankind, unless our representatives in Parliament hold places of profit under the king? If the profit of your place, for instance, and that of Lord Howick's and Lord Henry Petty's, were taken away, would you, all at once, become

the worst of mankind? "No," but, perhaps, it will be said, "you would be unable from want of means, to defray the expences attendant upon the filling of a high office." I do not, for my part, see the necessity of any such expences, when I know that every thing belonging to the office, down to the very pens and ink, is furnished by the public; and, when I am told of the keeping up of the *dignity* of the office, I really never can perceive how this is to be done by money, especially when I see no outward and visible signs of this dignity, and hear of nothing, for which ministers are, in the way of splendour, distinguished above other men, but the giving immense Dane-like dinners, the very accounts of which are surfeiting to men of mind, while they are cruelly insulting to the sinking and starving families with which the country abounds. You may read all the Paris papers long enough, Sir, without meeting with the history of a turtle-feast given by any minister of the Emperor Napoleon; and, if Napoleon himself had given turtle-feasts, and had associated with play-actors and buffoons, be assured that he never would have been an emperor.—But, supposing, merely for an argument's sake, that a man, when he becomes a member of the ministry, is compelled to live at a more expensive rate than he otherwise would do; or, supposing, that it is in vain to look for men who will serve as ministers without deriving profit from their services. If this be so; if the people, on whom the ministers call for sacrifices even of "the necessities of life," are to be told that these same ministers will not sacrifice so much as a part of their time; why, then, be it so; but, all that we, in such case contend for, is, that those ministers ought not to be members of the House of Commons, there to vote the public money into their own pockets. And, Sir, I think, it would be very difficult to shew how the business of the state would suffer from the banishment of that thing called the *Treasury Bench* out of the House of Commons. On the contrary, is it not notorious, that the business of that House interferes so much with the official business of ministers as to leave them little or no time for those reflections and deliberations, which are absolutely necessary to the well-governing of the country? And, how many are the instances, Sir, which you well know I could point out, where measures in the cabinet have been fashioned much more with a view to their effect in *debate*, than with a view to their national utility!—The great business of the House of Commons is, to watch over

the interests of the people, and not to grant any money which ought not to be granted. The writers upon our "Excellent Constitution," that constitution of which Mr. Mellish vows to be the champion, have, all of them, spoken in high terms of this *third branch* of the legislature. To be sure, say they, the King has great prerogatives and power, and so have the peers; but, then, the people are completely protected against all these; because without the consent of their representatives, that is, *of themselves*, not a shilling can the king obtain in taxes. This is the "glorious constitution," of which we have heard, and of which we talk so much; but, is *this* the sort of constitution which Mr. Mellish, and the like of him, have in view? Or, do they mean a constitution, which admits of a House of Commons, elected as the late House was, and headed by *the servants of the King*? A House of Commons, in which, when a member moved for certain papers relative to the expenditure of the public money, a servant of the King had the audacity to tell him, that the paper should not be produced, *because the member who moved for it had not previously communicated his motion to him!* This Sir, is the constitution, which Mr. Mellish and Mr. Sheridan eulogize, and which, I doubt not, they will defend to the utmost of their power.—That a man cannot serve two masters is universally allowed, and this maxim may, surely, be regarded as particularly applicable to a case where the two services have been devised as a *check* upon each other; but you Sir, if you are not grossly misreported in the news-papers, have, in your speech to the Freeholders of Norfolk, not only denied the truth of this maxim, as applicable to the case in question, but have asserted, that *the contrary* is the truth; and, that a servant of the King, so far from being *less* able to serve his constituents, is *more* able to serve them! If you meant, by serving his constituents, the obtaining of places for them, the making of them officers in the army or navy, or the giving livings to them, or the making of them excisemen or clerks or door-keepers or sweepers or messengers; if you meant, that he was *more* able to scatter the public money amongst them; more able to bribe them with the spoils of their country; if this was what you meant, Sir, you were certainly correct. But, I hope, and do believe, that this was not your meaning; yet, Sir, how, in any other sense, are the words attributed to your reconcileable to reason? If you spoke of services to be

performed in the *House of Commons*; and if your doctrine were sound, it would, of course, be better for the country, if that House consisted wholly of servants of the King. In one way or another, the House is, to say the truth, partly well furnished with such persons already; but, as they are *more* able to serve the people than any other description of persons; as they are even *better* than independent men, why should we not be completely blessed at once; especially when there are so many hundreds of placemen and pensioners, who have nothing upon earth to do, and to whom the passing of laws and the voting of money at St. Stephen's might offer an agreeable afternoon's amusement, and might a little relieve the bookseller's shops from that language which is now their curse.—Surely, Sir, when you uttered the words to which I have referred, you must have entirely forgotten the act of parliament above-quoted, which act was passed, observe, for the twofold purpose of *settling the crown upon the family of his Majesty*, and for *securing the liberty of the subject*. That act, with a view to this latter object especially, provides, "that *no* person holding an office or place of profit "under the king, or receiving a pension "from the crown, shall be capable of sitting "in the House of Commons;" but you tell the people, that the *fittest* of all persons to sit in the House of Commons are those which this law so explicitly disqualifies! And yet, Sir, you do not fail, when occasion offers, to call upon us to make sacrifices for the preservation of our "glorious constitution!"—The House of Commons ought to have the power, the real and practical power, of *refusing* to grant money. Has it this power, Sir? Does it ever refuse? Let the minister that asks it be what he may; whatever may be the purpose for which the money is wanted; have you ever witnessed a refusal? And, if every sum, be it what it may, is *sure* to be finally granted, where, I should be glad to know, is the use of that *power of the purse*, with which the world has been so long amused? That this invincible submission to the will of the minister of the day, no matter who or what he is, has proceeded from the power which that minister has of bestowing places and pensions upon the members, there will no doubt be pretended to be entertained by any well-informed and candid man; and, therefore, Sir, until this evil be removed, by restoring to us the practice of the constitution in this respect, I, for one, exert no effort done for the preservation of the country; because, until then, it would be folly worse

than childish to look for any measure calculated to lighten the burdens of the people and to encourage them to make those exertions, without which you will find regular armies, though partly composed of Hanoverian troops, of little avail against a powerful host of invaders.—Nevertheless, I shall in my next letter, proceed in pointing out such measures as I think ought to be adopted; and, in the meanwhile,

I remain,

Sir,

Your most humble,  
and most obedient Servant,  
W. COBBETT.

*Sir Francis Burdett's Address to the Free-holders of Middlesex, after the Close of the Election on the 27th of November, 1806.*

**GENTLEMEN**,—The moment before the commencement of the late Election for Middlesex, Mr. WHITBREAD, in a manner most unbecoming his station, connexions, and character, inserted in the public Newspapers the following passage, signed with his name: addressed indeed nominally, with dissembled respect to me; but intended as a political Electioneering Manœuvre against you.—“ I do not perceive in your present Address (says Mr. Whitbread) any allusion to an opinion promulgated by you on the late Election for Westminster, which is — ‘ That a person holding an Office under the Crown, however otherwise estimable, cannot at any time become the fit representative of a free, uncorrupt, and independent People.’ If such opinion be founded in truth, which (continues Mr. Whitbread) I utterly deny, a law ought to be passed to exclude all the executive servants of Government from seats in either House of Parliament. I have not heard, that it was in the contemplation of any one to propose such a measure: and, if proposed, I am sure, it would meet with resistance from all descriptions of persons, who have the power or the will to reason upon its consequences. The people by the acceptance of your doctrine, would reduce themselves to the hard necessity of being governed by the worst of mankind,”—These, Mr. Whitbread's sentiments, have likewise been recently paraded by Mr. Windham, Secretary of State; by Mr. Tierney, Chairman of the Board of Controul; by Mr. Sheridan, Treasurer of the Navy; and are now held, I presume, as the political creed of the whole party.—**Gentlemen**, In that act of Parliament (12 and 13 Will. 3.) which gave the throne of these kingdoms to his

present Majesty, and his family, intitled—“ An Act for the further limitation of the crown, and better securing the rights and liberties of the Subject,”—it was wisely and honestly thus enacted—“ That no person, who has an office or place of profit under the King, or receives a pension from the Crown, shall be capable of serving as a Member of the House of Commons.”—But Mr. Whitbread, it seems, never heard of this provision—“ for better securing the Rights and Liberties of the Subject.” And because, after a melancholly experience of the necessity of such a provision, which our honest ancestors only foresaw, I maintain the opinion of those from whom his Majesty holds his Crown, I am represented, by these best of Patriots, as an enemy to the Constitution, and by some of their place-holding and place-hunting Party, as a traitor to my country. The worst of traitors to their country are those who eat up its resources. Mr. Whitbread's judgement upon us who hold this opinion, is indeed something milder: he only concludes us to be either fools or rogues,—“ either we have not the power or the will to reason upon its consequences.”—I have reason to believe, that Mr. Whitbread himself possesses both the *will* and the *power* to obtain speedily a lucrative office under the crown, without much embarrassing himself with its consequences to the Public.—**GENTLEMEN**, When the last additional Taxes for the present year were lately imposed upon the People by these best of Patriots, it was undisguisedly and tranquilly acknowledged by them, without the least compunction, or commiseration of the People, that the necessary effect of these taxes would be, to drive the inhabitants of a house into lodgings, and the lodgers of the first floor into the second. Here indeed they stopped; leaving us to complete the miserable picture of national calamity: viz. that the lodgers of the second floor must mount up into the garret, the garretter descend into the cellar; whose former wretched inhabitant must be thrust out upon the pavement, and from thence transferred to the workhouse or the grave. And this process is to be repeated *toties quoties*;—so that the best provided amongst us cannot tell where himself and his family may be found at last. This is a hard lesson for Englishmen to hear. It is harder still to hear it enforced from the mouths of those, who themselves are all the while creeping forward from their original garrets into palaces. Such unfeeling insult as this would never have taken place but amidst placemen and pensioners. Had they been



really the Representatives of the People, they would have felt something for the People; and instead of incessantly calling for fresh sacrifices, and telling us gaily that we must "retrench even part of our necessities," they would surely now at last have held out to us some prospect of consolation and redress; they would no longer continue to gorge upon the vitals of their country, but would think themselves too well off, if they were not justly compelled to disgorge their past infamous swallowings.—GENTLEMEN, In becoming a Candidate at the late Election for your county, I do acknowledge, that I rather sought a Public, than a seat in Parliament. I sought for, and have found, amongst you, Freeholders who would vote for themselves, and not for any Candidate, —who would not give their votes as a favour conferred, but as a sacred trust reposed in an honest man, to enable him to stem the torrent against these venal Coalition Whigs, who are, by their own avowal, hunting the People of this country from the second floor to the garret.—That this system of corruption and oppression may cease, is the only ardent wish, and, in spite of every calumny, shall ever be the constant and unremitting endeavour of, Gentlemen, your most obedient and respectful humble Servant,

FRANCIS BURDETT.

MAJOR CARTWRIGHT'S SECOND LETTER TO  
MR. WHITBREAD.

29th November, 1806.

DEAR SIR;—Our elections being now over, there remains one other passage in your letter to Sir Francis Burdett, on which I must enter into a little expostulation with you. It is the following—

"I have supported the present administration from a conviction that they were united upon principles of real public utility, and for the purpose of carrying into execution, plans of great national improvement, both in our foreign and domestic circumstances; and I cannot abandon them, because, in a situation more difficult than that in which any of their predecessors have ever stood, they have not been able to effect, what I believe to have been nearest the hearts of them all—I mean a peace with France, seeing such a peace could not have been obtained upon terms consistent with national honour: and because time has not sufficed to mature and execute the schemes of internal improvement, which they have manifested their determination to pursue."

Had this paragraph contained the word *reformation* it would, I confess, have af-

firmed me more satisfaction. From an old member of the "FRIENDS OF THE PEOPLE," and a man of firm and decided character, I should naturally have looked for language more explicit, more in the style of the plain honest English of the Duke of Bedford—who, in a letter dated the 29th of April 1805, says "I should be ashamed to give support to any set of men who did not feel the necessity of a radical amendment in the whole system of our government. The source of our evils is an inadequate defective representation of the people in parliament, and until that source is cut off, in my humble judgment, abuse and corruption will never cease to flow in a thousand different channels. I hope and trust, the day is not far distant, when that most desirable want, a substantial and radical reform in the representation of the people, may be brought to bear: in the mean time, let them see the extent of their grievances, let them know whence they arise, and let them coolly and dispassionately form their own judgments upon the best and surest remedy: it is at hand, simple and of easy attainment." \*

Although, Sir, we cannot doubt of your consistency, nor of that of your political friends, in adhering to the cause of parliamentary reformation, especially as the reasons for it daily grow stronger and stronger, yet it were much to have been wished, as a ground of hope to the nation, which certainly stands in need of every thing that can raise a hope of its condition being bettered; that you had at least hinted at such reformation having been one of the objects of the union and pursuit of his Majesty's present ministers. But I will proceed.

'Peace nearest the hearts of ministers.'—'Peace not to be obtained with honour'—How should it, when the natural and most obvious means to that end had been neglected? In *Napoleon*, either as a statesman, or as a warrior, do ministers see one whom England can awe into moderation and amity, while she puts not forth half her defensive energies? What those energies are, is fully unfolded in "England's *Ægis*," a new edition of which work I had the honour to present to each member of the cabinet last spring soon after the new ministry was formed. If it then made on their minds but little impression, the military events now before their eyes perhaps may. The doctrines of the *Ægis*, and those events teach the same lesson. That it may practically

\* *State of the Nation* by J. C. 144.

influence the conduct of our rulers, 'ere the war get into the bowels of our own country, and thereby hazard the existence of the state, is my prayer.

“Schemes of internal improvement” which ministers “have manifested their de-“termination to pursue.”—What! when empires and potent kingdoms in the twinkling of an eye are daily vanquished from our sight—when, at the pointing of the great necromancer's sabre, Victory conducts his legions to battle, and Dominion takes her course in the direction he bids, are we to counteract the spell, by making auditors of accounts? Are we to avert from ourselves the mighty mischief, that has overwhelmed so many nations, by “improving” the law courts beyond the Tweed?—As many “internal improvements” as ministers please, but, as foundations of their fiance as statesmen, in the present crisis of England's destiny, such petty objects are very trash and trumpery. Napoleon, I doubt not, has his “internal improvements” in finance and police, but these are not the things of which you hear. To place France at the head of nations, and himself at the head of all conquerors, are *his* objects. To place England as the rock of security, to preserve her independence and her honour, ought to be the leading object of her ministers.

I ask you, Mr. Whitbread, as a man of experience and ability, as a man of constitutional knowledge, as a patriot, and as a man of honour, if ministers could merit your support, or if they could deserve the name of statesmen, were they incapable of comprehending this great truth, that POLITICAL LIBERTY MUST BE THE TRUE BASIS OF ENGLAND'S DEFENCE?—I then ask, what is political liberty? You, who took so active a part in “THE FRIENDS OF THE PEOPLE,” know as well as I in what it consists. Whatever we may think of the advantages of institutions not necessarily producing freedom, you know as well as I, that political liberty and legislative representation are convertible terms. If, therefore, our political liberty consists in being represented in the Commons House of Parliament, and nothing else, how infinitely important to us is the purity of that house!

I know not, Sir, whether you actually signed the petition drawn up by “THE FRIENDS OF THE PEOPLE,” and now upon the Journals of the Commons, for the 6th of May, 1793, but, I am sure you are well acquainted with its contents. Eight years ago, I remarked, that, on the authority of that petition, I found “the majority seated “in the house by the crown, by the bo-

“rough-holders and the peers,” at only “307;” but, that in a newspaper statement,\* taken from the *History of the Boroughs*, it was then said “to amount to no less than the dreadful number of 424.” This was when the house consisted of only 558 members.

If, Sir, among “the schemes” of the cabinet to which you allude, a reformation of this be one, why, in God's name, not proclaim it aloud! It requires no hesitation, no veil. What is it but this reformation that can give heart and hope to an almost despairing public? What but this, can silence faction and unite the nation in support of patriot ministers? What but this, and arms in the hands of England's millions, can check the career of him who has already nearly conquered the whole Continent, but who has hitherto conquered none but *slaves*?

That man calls us a nation of shopkeepers, and truly, Sir, I am not surprized. In too much of our policy, there is the meanness of the shop. In a dirty traffic for votes we see eagerness in the extreme; while the vital principles of freedom scarcely find an advocate. The borough trade, contraband and iniquitous, is now a road to what I will not name; and its contamination degrades even those whom one would be proud to respect. Parties contend by all the arts of intrigue for the reins of government; but which of them, when it prevails, manifests a grandeur of sentiment by restoring to the people the rights they have lost, or repairing the damage which the constitution has received? These are not views to enter into minds intent upon the emoluments of office, fees, sinecures, stock-jobbery and all the other profits of the shop.

And which, again, among the statesmen who have been rivals as war ministers, has shewn himself superior to the contracted views and sordid policy of the shop—for every thing which wants the generosity and dignity arising from a genuine love of constitutional liberty, I account selfish and sordid.—No one of them has founded his defensive system on THE ENGLISH CONSTITUTION, or THE LIBERTY OF HIS COUNTRY? The two conspicuous features in the place of

\* On the 12th January, 1798, the Morning Chronicle gave a list of members, holding civil and military appointments, places, contracts, and sinecures *under the crown*, with near relations, &c. which amounted to *one hundred and sixty-three*. It was from the same statement the above number, 424, was copied.

each, have been a *PERMANENT standing army*; and a *TEMPORARY arming* of portions of the people at the *discretion* of ministers, liable to be blown away by a breath of their lips.—Is this the way to encounter him, who in a few days utterly annihilates immense *standing armies* famed for tactics and discipline? When landed upon our shores, what has England to him, before whom all *despotic nations* fall, but her *LIBERTY*! Despots dare not arm their millions. An enslaved population to a regular army is “an “unresisting medium;” while an English population armed, and organized agreeably to the *Constitution*, must prove a barrier which the conquerors of the continent could never pass, were every soldier a *Napoleon*.

If, Sir, you regard the fame of those whom you support, if with humility and true devotion you bow before the shrine of your country, impress upon those ministers the few simple truths of the constitution on which I have touched. Receiving those truths, their situation will no longer be “difficult:” Their course will be straight before them. Their proper line of conduct will be that which he who runs may read. In saving their country they cannot fail.

Shall I be told of *unseen difficulties*?—Have these ministers the confidence of their sovereign? If they have not, if they cannot do that which is necessary to save the state, they have no business where they are; and their continuance in office can only deceive the people, and bring the kingdom to ruin. If they have their sovereign's confidence we will adopt their advice. Firmly supported by their lawful sovereign, ministers are more than a match for the mock sovereignty of our borough potentates, and may at their pleasure lay it prostrate on the dunghill from whence it sprang. Neither its wealth, nor all its mercenaries, can save it from perdition, when once an honest king and honest ministers shall have determined, that it shall cease to reign.

I shall not at present speak of the part to be taken by the people in this business. If the king and his ministers should be agreed, the part of the people will then be very easy. It is because I do not imagine the people wish for such a state of things, as exposed Italy, Holland, Austria, and Prussia to conquest, that I presume upon their readiness to second their sovereign and his ministers in the natural means of precaution.

I have the honour to remain,

Dear Sir,

Your most obedient humble Servant,

JOHN CARTWRIGHT.

#### MILITARY FORCE.

SIR,—It is most justly observed by Mr. Dugald Stewart, in his account of Dr. Smith that “the happiness of mankind depends “not on the share which the people pos-“sesses, directly or indirectly, in the enact-“ment of laws, but on the equity and expe-“diency of the laws that are enacted;” and that “the value which wise men set on po-“litical freedom, arises chiefly from the fa-“cility it is supposed to afford for the in-“troduction of those legislative improve-“ments, which the general interests of the “community recommend.” The most celebrated writers, such as Smith, Quesnai, Turgot, Cumpomanes, Beccaria, and others, have accordingly “aimed at the improve-“ment of society, not by delineating plans “of new constitutions, but by enlightening “the policy of actual legislators.” Mr. Stewart also cites a passage from Lord Bacon in which the object which a wise and en- lightened statesman ought to have in view, is stated to be that the people may live quietly and happily, and the means are pointed out by which this great end may be most effectually attained. Lord Bacon reckons it necessary, that they should be *armis adversus hostes externos tuti*; pro- tected against the violence of external ene- mies. But in order to afford them complete protection, it would be necessary to under- stand, in what way a nation will be most likely to add to its effective strength, be- cause, if the people are ignorant in this im- portant particular, the political liberty which they enjoy, will only furnish them, as Mr. Stewart observes, with the means of accom- plishing their own ruin.—But in Britain, not only the actual legislators have an in- fluence in the making of laws; but indirectly the great body of the people, and this in- fluence is not inconsiderable, because it is not every man who chooses to expose him- self to that boundless rage and obloquy which must ever be the lot of him who thwarts their prevailing prejudices, or shews them their errors. There are always too in this country, a set of men constantly ready to administer fuel to the angry passions of the multitude, by their vulgar and intemperate abuse of those whose views happen to be su- perior to their own, and as their situation af- fords them all necessary obscurity, they ven- ture without scruple on the most open prosti- tution of truth. These are principally edi- tors of newspapers and other periodical publications. And, although the trash which they circulate may be extremely per- nicious, no person who pretends to the cha- racter of a gentleman can think of noticing

it. Who could reply to the vulgar ribaldry of the *Courier*? The *Morning Chronicle* might have been useful in enlightening the public judgment, as it is the only daily paper which displays any information or ability, and in this respect, it has some merit, but the editor seems to have sunk into the tame hireling of a party; and to forward the views of his party, he does not appear to scruple at the mean propagation of interested falsehood.—The great object of our internal policy since the peace of Amiens, or at any rate since the breaking out of the present war, ought undoubtedly to have been the improvement of our warlike strength, and a comprehensive plan ought to have been devised for that purpose, which should have been steadily adhered to. As the power of France at that time was also an object of well grounded alarm, and as her views of ambition were sufficiently manifested in her unprovoked aggression and subjection of Switzerland, the object of our foreign policy ought to have been silently to lay the foundation of a general and universal concert against her, and in the gradual improvement and increase of our military force, which would have been the result of a wise and systematical plan for that purpose early adopted and steadily pursued, our internal policy would have given life and vigour to our foreign policy. One important question for deliberation therefore, was, in what way is a nation most likely to be effectually and advantageously protected. This was a question undoubtedly far too delicate to be settled by the tempestuous clamours of an angry multitude. It was a question intirely for the philosopher, on which no settled opinion can be formed without the most patient meditation, and without also an extensive examination of historical evidence. Those however, who at that time ventured to oppose the plans which were projected, namely, the establishment of the Volunteer system in such splendour, and the raising of such a large proportion of force, by the very nature of its constitution chained to the soil, were persecuted by glamour and misrepresentation; and held up almost as enemies to their country, and Mr. Pitt, whose declamation at that time alarmed all sober inquirers, was, and has been ever since most blindly exalted as a popular idol. As the subject is of importance, I shall endeavour to argue the matter with those of your readers who will listen to argument on a topic which has given rise to such angry passions; and, as my object is not to irritate, but to convince, I shall confine myself to calm reasoning.—It appears to me from the most ample survey

of historical evidence, that an efficient military force has been in all ages a sure foundation, not only of national security, but of great political pre-eminence and power; and that, wherever a well trained and disciplined army has existed, it has uniformly commanded the respect, and often the submission of foreign powers. Armies have been indeed, in all ages, the immediate and efficient instruments in bringing about all those important revolutions of which history has preserved any authentic record. By what means did the Romans achieve the conquest of the world, but by means of a standing army? Being originally forced to struggle for their existence, necessity gave a warlike complexion to the manners of this wonderful people, which they ever afterwards preserved. Their armies were almost constantly in the field, and were composed of men exclusively devoted to the military profession, and the nations whom they attacked were the peaceful inhabitants who were occasionally trained to the use of arms. But, were they ever able to withstand the steady shock of the Roman battalions? It is impossible to trace the uniform success of the Romans to any other cause than to the superiority of a well disciplined standing army, over a mass of irregular force, such as our volunteers. Where the Romans were not successful, it was owing also to the very same cause, namely, to their being obliged to oppose men unpractised in war to the attack of a well disciplined, and well commanded regular force. This was invariably the case in all their battles with Hannibal in Italy. Hannibal's force had been inured to the hardships and perils of war in Spain, and in every action their superiority was great and manifest. View the same Hannibal in Africa, commanding the African militia (or volunteers) discomfited and defeated by Scipio's veterans. In short, wherever there has been any nation pre-eminent in consequence and power above other nations, we shall find that it has owed its elevation to a superiority of warlike strength. To what are we to ascribe the fall of the Grecian states, but to the superiority of the Macedonian army, which was kept in constant pay by Philip, and had been employed in subduing or chastising frontier states. The Greek militia though pretty well trained, were unable in the battle of Chaeronea to withstand the attack of the Macedonian veterans. To what are we to ascribe the fall of Persia, but to the same cause? Whenever a nation is surrounded by regular armies, it must either adopt the same system, or it must hold its independence at the mer-

cy of a more powerful neighbour. This is proved by the whole experience of history. To what does Buonaparté owe his present importance, but to the superiority of his army, and if it enables him to vanquish the armies of other states, which are not brought to the same state of perfection, how much more completely would he rout and discomfit any other species of irregular force? Would it not, therefore, be to the last degree imprudent to expose the volunteers to the attack of his veteran battallions hardened by long service, inured to peril, and flushed with constant triumphs? Could any man rationally hope for success in such an unequal contest? Or would he hazard the safety of the state on the steady valour of raw troops? Although these conclusions appear to be perfectly plain and incontrovertible, if we chuse to be guided by reason and argument, yet a man cannot hold these opinions without being hunted by popular obloquy and clamour. Mr. Windham, because he said that in case of a battle the volunteers might become the depositary of panic, has been traduced, abused, and misrepresented with the most vulgar scurrility. But does not all history prove that the best troops are occasionally seized with a panic, and that it requires the greatest exertions frequently to rally them? Even the strong and constant curb of military discipline, cannot therefore prevent the temporary prevalence of natural feelings; and, it is surely, therefore, extremely natural for Mr. Windham, and for every man who reasons, to think, that they will much more readily predominate, where they have never been under any check. And yet this statesman has been subjected to the most intemperate scurrility and abuse, because he has expressed an opinion that the volunteers would act in a battle, as men placed in their circumstances have always done, and as even disciplined troops have sometimes done. Mr. Pitt indeed said, that the volunteers were fit to stand in the line with regulars, and he trusted they would not form the weakest part of the line. But this is a mere assertion contradicted as I have shown by the whole experience of history, and I have not been able, though I have very carefully ransacked Mr. Pitt's speeches, to find that he supports his opinion by any argument. I find, indeed, a great deal of declamation about dispersing and routing the enemy with utter ruin, defeat, and discomfiture, chastising the insolence of Buonaparté, delivering the Continent, &c. &c. &c. But, I do not perceive that he ever attempted to shew that the measures adopted were likely to attain the end proposed, or to an-

swer any of the objections which were urged against them. He perpetually indulged in sketching imaginary pictures of political prosperity, but he left to others the rugged task of dealing with intractable realities. It is no wonder that Mr. Pitt was the popular idol, because he yielded to the fickle humours of the people, he flattered their prejudices, he lulled them with the illusions of Buonaparté hambled and chastised: While those who broke this pleasing harmony by the intrusion of disagreeable truths, who told them that their means were inadequate, and summoned them to fresh exertions, were universally looked upon as rude and ungrateful monitors. But, it is also urged against Mr. Windham, that he said that a good general would rather want the volunteers, because they would encumber the operations of his army, and that it was a disgrace to the army that the volunteers were permitted to wear red coats. But, if the volunteers are not equal to regular soldiers, if they are not fit for the most daring and desperate hostility, which our regular soldiers confessedly are, it is most evident that they will encumber and enfeeble their operations, and that a good general would rather be without them as regular soldiers. With regard to the second point, namely, that the army are disgraced by the volunteers wearing red coats, I heard Mr. Windham most successfully, and with becoming resentment, repel this most disgraceful misrepresentation, (and many others indeed, which were very copiously retailed by Mr. Perceval) in the following words: "With respect to the particular expressions which the learned gent. imputes to me on a former occasion, I can assure him that I never made use of such expressions. What I said then, and what I am prepared to say still is, that distinctions, whether honorary or ornamental, are the life and soul of an army, that no army can exist without them, and that the more common those distinctions are rendered, their value is the more depreciated. This is the opinion which I then expressed, and which I am ready to support by argument, if the learned gent. chuses to argue with me, but I am not to be deterred by clamour from expressing and maintaining opinions which appear to me to be conformable to truth and reason." Can any thing be more clear or satisfactory? This is agreeable to common sense and sound philosophy. But it is the last effort of defeated faction to bring a man's opinions against him in the shape of a reproach. And men who in the discussion of a speculative question resort to those arts of misrepresen-

tation for the purpose of inflaming the passions of the mob, are below the reach of argument or philosophy.—As it is obvious that without a large regular army, Britain may possibly be secure at home, (although that may be even questioned), but must always continue insignificant abroad, it is natural to inquire why our military plans were not in a most especial manner directed to the increase of our regular force; and, it is indeed, most unaccountable, that Mr. Pitt who always talked of rousing the Continent, should yet consent to raise a force chained to the soil by the very laws of its existence, and incapable of affording the slightest assistance to a single ally. The militia and supplementary militia, and the army of reserve were all of this description. These plans were opposed by Mr. Windham, who asked, if any rational man thought it possible with such a large mass of such a force, that we could have a regular army. But the counsel of this gentleman, like the predictions of the ancient prophetess, is always despised when offered, until experience extorts a reluctant assent from the most refractory opposition. The army of reserve was raised, the balloting system went on, bounties rose to an extravagant height, the regular recruiting was at a stand, and to close this miserable scene of mismanagement and folly, Mr. Pitt produced his parish bill, remarkable for nothing but for the notable conceit of converting parish officers into recruiting sergeants. The consequence of all this confusion was, that we had no army; while our enemy had improved in military strength we had declined. On the Continent, therefore, we had no weight but what our money gave us, which was an odious source of influence, and was also comparatively very insignificant. A system, therefore, of foreign and internal policy was pursued radically wrong in all its parts. A partial coalition was formed, which instead of delivering the continental states from oppression, rivetted their chains. The glory of Europe may now indeed, be said to be extinguished. This is the more to be lamented, as I conceive that the state of affairs in Europe presented peculiar facilities for forming a general confederacy against France, because the alarming increase of power which she had acquired was notorious, and the evils to be apprehended from her ambition were not matter of vague conjecture or of remote suspicion; they were visible and imminent. The humiliation of France must have been desired equally by all the European powers. And, in point of fact, they all saw that it was necessary for their own safety. They might differ about

the means, but in the end they all agreed\*. The violent and unjust conduct of France, it appears now (and I do not think it was ever a matter of doubt) made the same impression on Prussia as on other states. Since, therefore, the principal nations in Europe were actuated by the same views, would it have been impossible, had wise statesmen presided in England or any other country, to have united them together in principles of self-preservation for the purpose of resisting the encroachments of the common enemy? Would it have been impossible to have established a friendly and confidential intercourse between powers virtually united by congenial desires and by common interests, to have promoted a frank and unreserved communication of views, and means, and resources, and thus to have laid the foundations of a firm confederacy, not for the purpose of making a sudden irruption of hostility against France, but for the purpose of observing her motions, and in case war should be ultimately necessary, of preparing in harmony and in concert all those measures which might be thought necessary to oppose her with success? In those amicable consultations plans of hostility might have been agreed upon, the number of troops to be employed might have been settled, and as such vast interests were at stake, the most choice and skilful generals might have been selected, so that when the crisis arrived, the confederates might have wielded at once against the enemy their whole consolidated strength. When by the wise policy of King William, the whole of Europe was united in one grand confederacy for the purpose of wresting the Spanish monarchy from a French heir, will it be believed, that in the present times, when the calamities arising from the undue increase of French power were not of remote or uncertain apprehension, but were actually felt in all their bitterness by one half of Europe, and were dreaded by the rest; will it be believed, I say, that in such circumstances the few surviving states could not have been brought to concur in joint measures for their own safety? Were not the motives to exertion equally strong and obvious; were not the objects to be attained equally desirable; and were not the dangers to be warded off equally near and formidable? I always proceed on the supposition, that Britain could have sent and maintained on the Continent from 80 to 100,000 men. Because such a force would have given spirit to our foreign policy, and an irresistible weight to our arguments; and

\* See Manifesto of Prussia.

because, in my opinion, it is a most serious charge against Mr. Pitt, that with a population of 15,000,000 we had no such army; from which charge I should like to hear him defended by those who voted public honours to his memory. The evil consequences of the ruin of our army spread far and wide. It deprived us of the natural consequence which we ought to have possessed on the Continent; and it gave rise to a coalition imperfect both in extent and in the union of its parts. The consequences are too well known. The war with Prussia naturally arose out of the weakened, disjointed state of the Continent, and no rational man is disappointed at its issue.—The great object of our policy now must be to provide an army; and this must be done by discarding all our former idle projects. You must render the profession of a soldier respectable, by exclusive honours, privileges, and immunities; you must render it desirable by the term of service, and by providing for a long and faithful discharge of duty, a competent and secure provision. And you must above all things employ regular recruiting serjeants. As to the armed peasantry, this scheme seems to be derided by those who do not understand its nature. They seem to think it will be a disorderly mob without officers, and that it will be inferior to the volunteers. But one great property of the armed peasantry is, that they may do a great deal of service with no risk, whereas, the volunteers if defeated, (and it is likely, I think, that they would be defeated) would occasion the discomfiture of the whole army. But those who deride an armed peasantry, should read the history of the American war. They should look at the Calabrian peasantry. They should consider that the Neapolitan peasantry under Cardinal Ruffo delivered their country from the French; and a thousand other instances where they have been of incalculable service without any sort of risk. I have thus, Sir, stated my reasons for being friendly to Mr. Windham's views, and for not joining in a blind admiration of Mr. Pitt. B.—Nov. 26, 1806.

## NEW SINECURE.

SIR;—Even the friends of administration here are astonished by the creation of a *new Sinecure*, which has lately been bestowed on the professor of moral philosophy in our university. The literary merits of Mr. Dugald Stewart are well known to the world. His work on the Philosophy of the Human Mind, will transmit his name with honor to posterity; and the impressive eloquence with which he inculcates the great truths of morals and politics, in the important official

station which he fills, has for nearly thirty years attracted the admiration of his countrymen. Every person of a liberal mind would have rejoiced, that some mark of public approbation should have been bestowed on the first literary character in Scotland; and on a man, besides, whose services as an instructor of youth, entitle him to rank in the first order of useful citizens. Yet, Sir, though the approbation of the country would have gone with the ministry who rewarded Mr. Stewart's useful and important labours with a pension, what good citizen can see without indignation, a titular office with a salary of 300l., created, one would think, in order to sport with the feelings of the people? This proceeding of the ministry appears altogether unaccountable. But such is the mania for sinecures which has seized the Whigs, that I do believe the Earl of Lauderdale and his friends, to whose perverse ingenuity we owe this addition to the public burdens, are seriously convinced that they have bestowed a greater favour on Mr. Stewart, by giving him 300 pounds with the name of an office, and the consolatory reflection that it is a tax entailed for ever on the people, than if they had given him a pension of 300 guineas as the reward of merit, and a mark of the gratitude of his country. Let them not tell us that the patent of *Writer, Compiler, and Publisher of the Edinburgh Gazette*, extends only to the end of 20 years. It is much easier to create sinecures than to destroy them. If we had found by experience, that ministers and placemen are daily becoming more virtuous, we might have believed that those who shall rule this country 20 years hence, will not look to this patent as a precedent. If the present ministry do not scruple to introduce a new evil, what security have we, that those who succeed them will not continue an old evil to which we are familiarized by habit?—I entreat you, Mr. Cobbett, either to introduce some remarks of your own, or to publish this letter in the next number of your Register, which is now almost the only record of truth. I am confident that my sentiments are those of every independent man, and I know that you feel the importance of opinions, which can neither be bought nor sold.—In the eyes of the present ministry, whose only estimate of political importance, seems to be the number of members who can be by them returned to serve in the House of Commons, Scotland may, perhaps, be an object of less consequence than Cornwall: but you have laboured to prove, that the representation of Westminster, is of more importance than that of old Sarum.—I remain, Sir, &c.

Edinburgh, Nov. 23.

EDINENSIS.

## ON RETALIATION AGAINST FRANCE.

SIR,—Unless the British government immediately retaliates upon France in the only way we have left, that is, by prohibiting all maritime intercourse with it and any other state whatsoever, there is no possibility of checking that exercise of French power, the continuance of which must inevitably ruin this country. Such a measure will certainly offend the maritime states, but it is necessary to save ourselves, and their hostility is of little importance compared with our own political safety and independence. The people wait with anxiety for some daring and decisive line of conduct to be adopted by our government. They see the necessity of extraordinary measures. At this time the vessel will answer the helm, and all on board are willing, but she is running fast ashore and the weather tempestuous. Haste must therefore be made to save her, or the crew will despair, and then all is lost. If you approve my idea, I shall be much gratified to see it taken up by you, and enforced in the Political Register in that impressive style for which you are so particularly distinguished, or give this letter a corner in your valuable paper, and oblige,—

A CONSTANT READER.

## TO THE EDITOR.

SIR,—In your Register of the 15th of November, you have inserted an address from Major Cartwright to the Electors of Boston, one passage of which has been recently pointed out to me and calls for observation. In your page 778 of the 10th volume, is the passage to which I allude, and it stands thus: "Above 20 years ago, and in my hearing, it was proclaimed in parliament by Mr. Pitt, that the Nabob of Arcot had his seven or eight members in the House of Commons of England; at a subsequent period, the same minister might have known that as great a number of mercenaries were placed in this House, to be guardians of the infernal slave trade, by the gold of Jamaica." To the assertion in the latter part of this paragraph, I request your attention; for, understanding it as I do, and, as I presume, all that heard the Major must do, it is false. That seven or eight or even a greater number of gentlemen, whose property in whole or in part has been acquired in the British Colony of Jamaica, may have been at any

time in parliament, I will readily grant, and it will be difficult to assign any reason, I presume, why they should not find a seat there in common with other subjects of the realm. But the Major speaks of mercenaries *placed there* by the gold of Jamaica, meaning, no doubt, by the public purse of that island, and in this sense he will upon inquiry find that he has made an assertion unwarrantable and untrue. Mr. Robert Small, who received a salary as agent in this country for Jamaica, had at one time a seat in the House of Commons, to which, independently of his connection with one of the most valuable dependencies of the British empire, he was by his education and talent well entitled, and presuming that in that House he might feel it to be his duty to protect the rights and interests of the colony, it will yet be impossible on this foundation to justify the Major's assertion, or to vindicate the candour and pertinency of the comparison the Major has made of a representation, by whatever means of our own colonial interests, with the representation of the peculiar interests of a foreign potentate.—I am, &c. &c.—COLONUS.

## FOREIGN OFFICIAL PAPER.

CONTINENTAL WAR.—Twenty-first Bulletin of the Grand French Army.

Berlin, Oct. 28.—Yesterday the Emperor made his public entry into this city; he was attended by the Prince of Neufchâtel, the Marshals Davoust and Augereau. Marshal Lefèvre headed the train with the Imperial Foot Guards. The Cuirassiers of Nansouty's division were drawn up in order of battle along the road. The Emperor marched between the Grenadiers and Horse Yagers belonging to his Life Guard. At three in the afternoon he alighted at the Palace, where he was received by the Grand Marshal Duroc. A vast concourse of people had assembled, as spectators of this ceremony.—The road from Charlottenburg to Berlin is very good, and the entrance through the gate is superb. It was a most beautiful day. The whole of the Civil Administration, presented by General Hulen, came to offer the keys to the Emperor. This body immediately waited upon His Majesty. The General Prince Hatzfeldt was at their head.

To be continued.